

Sūrah At-Taṭfif

(Curtailing the Rights)

Sūrah At-Taṭfif was revealed in Makkah It has 36 Verses and 1 Section.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 36

وَيْلٌ لِّلْمُطَفِّفِينَ ﴿١﴾ الَّذِينَ إِذَا اكْتَالُوا عَلَى النَّاسِ يَسْتَوْفُونَ ﴿٢﴾
وَأِذَا كَالُوهُمْ أَوْ وَزَنُوهُمْ يُخْسِرُونَ ﴿٣﴾ أَلَا يَظُنُّ أُولَٰئِكَ أَنَّهُمْ
مَبْعُوثُونَ ﴿٤﴾ لِيَوْمٍ عَظِيمٍ ﴿٥﴾ يَوْمَ يَقُومُ النَّاسُ لِرَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٦﴾
كَلَّا إِنَّ كِتَابَ الْفُجَارِ لَفِي سَجِّينٍ ﴿٧﴾ وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا سَجِّينٌ ﴿٨﴾
كِتَابٌ مَّرْقُومٌ ﴿٩﴾ وَيْلٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِّلْمُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿١٠﴾ الَّذِينَ يُكَذِّبُونَ
بِیَوْمِ الدِّينِ ﴿١١﴾ وَمَا يُكْذِّبُ بِهِ إِلَّا كُلُّ مُعْتَدٍ أَثِيمٍ ﴿١٢﴾ إِذَا تُتْلَىٰ
عَلَيْهِ آيَاتُنَا قَالِ اسَاطِيرُ الْأَوَّلِينَ ﴿١٣﴾ كَلَّا بَلْ رَانَ عَلَىٰ قُلُوبِهِمْ
مَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ ﴿١٤﴾ كَلَّا إِنَّهُمْ عَنْ رَبِّهِمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ لَّمْ حُجُّوْا
﴿١٥﴾ ثُمَّ إِنَّهُمْ لَصَالُوا الْجَحِيمِ ﴿١٦﴾ ثُمَّ يُقَالُ هَٰذَا الَّذِي كُنْتُمْ بِهِ
تُكَذِّبُونَ ﴿١٧﴾ كَلَّا إِنَّ كِتَابَ الْآبَرَارِ لَفِي عِلِّيِّينَ ﴿١٨﴾ وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ
مَا عِلِّيُّونَ ﴿١٩﴾ كِتَابٌ مَّرْقُومٌ ﴿٢٠﴾ يَشْهَدُهُ الْمُقَرَّبُونَ ﴿٢١﴾ إِنَّ
الْآبَرَارَ لَفِي نَعِيمٍ ﴿٢٢﴾ عَلَى الْأَرَآئِكِ يَنْظُرُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾ تَعْرِفُ فِي

وَجُوهِهِمْ نَضْرَةَ النَّعِيمِ ﴿٢٤﴾ يُسْقَوْنَ مِنْ رَحِيقٍ مَخْتُومٍ ﴿٢٥﴾
 خِتْمُهُ مِسْكٌ وَفِي ذَلِكَ فَلْيَتَنَافَسِ الْمُتَنَفِسُونَ ﴿٢٦﴾ وَمِمَّا جَاءُ مِنْ
 تَسْنِيمٍ ﴿٢٧﴾ عَيْنًا يَشْرَبُ بِهَا الْمُقَرَّبُونَ ﴿٢٨﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ أَجْرَمُوا
 كَانُوا مِنَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا يَضْحَكُونَ ﴿٢٩﴾ وَإِذَا مَرُّوا بِهِمْ يَتَغَامَزُونَ
 ﴿٣٠﴾ وَإِذَا انْقَلَبُوا إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهِمْ انْقَلَبُوا فَكِهِينَ ﴿٣١﴾ وَإِذَا رَأَوْهُمْ
 قَالُوا إِنَّ هَٰؤُلَاءِ لَضَالُّونَ ﴿٣٢﴾ وَمَا أُرْسِلُوا عَلَيْهِمْ خَفِظِينَ ﴿٣٣﴾
 فَالْيَوْمَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنَ الْكُفَّارِ يَضْحَكُونَ ﴿٣٤﴾ عَلَى الْأَرَائِكِ ۖ
 يَنْظُرُونَ ﴿٣٥﴾ هَلْ نُوبَ الْكُفَّارُ مَا كَانُوا يَفْعَلُونَ ﴿٣٦﴾

Woe to the curtailers [1] who, when they measure something to receive from people, take it in full, [2] and when they measure or weigh something to give it to them, give less than due. [3] Do they not think that they have to be raised up [4] on a Great Day, [5] the Day when all the people will stand before the Lord of the worlds? [6] Never! (i.e. they should never forget that Day.) Indeed the Record of Deeds of the sinners is in *sijjīn*. [7] And what may let you know what *sijjīn* is? [8] A register, inscribed! [9] Woe that day to the deniers, [10] who deny the Day of Requital! [11] And none denies it but every sinful transgressor. [12] When Our verses are recited to him, he says, "(These are) tales of the ancients." [13] No! But that which they used to commit has covered their hearts with rust. [14] No! Indeed they will be screened off from their Lord on that Day. [15] Then they will have to enter the Hell. [16] Then it will be said, "This is what you used to deny." [17]

No! The record of deeds of the righteous is in *'illiyyūn*. [18] And what may let you know what *'illiyyūn* is? [19] A register inscribed, [20] attended by those (angels) who are blessed with nearness to Allah! [21] Indeed the righteous will be in absolute bliss. [22] While (sitting) on thrones, they will be watching (the scenes of Paradise). [23] You will recognize on their faces the glamour of bliss. [24] They will be served with a pure sealed wine to drink, [25] the seal of which will be of musk. And in aspiring for this, the competitors should

compete. [26] and it will be blended with (a drink from) Tasnīm, [27] a spring from which will drink those who are blessed with nearness. [28]

Indeed those who were guilty used to laugh at those who believed, [29] and when they passed by them, they used to wink at one another, [30] and when they went back to their family, they went enjoying their mockery, [31] and when they saw them, they said, "Surely these are the ones who have gone astray" [32] while they were not sent as watchmen over them. [33] So, today those who believed will laugh at the disbelievers. [34] While (sitting) on thrones, they will be seeing [35] whether the disbelievers have been paid back for what they used to do. [36]

Commentary

According to Sayyidnā ‘Abdullāh Ibn Mas‘ūd رضي الله عنه, Sūrah Taṭfīf was revealed in Makkah. Therefore, most of the copies of the Qur’ān refer to it as the Makkī Sūrah. According to Sayyidnā Ibn ‘Abbās, Qatādah, Muqātil and Ḍaḥḥāk رضي الله عنه, it is a Madanī Sūrah, but only about eight verses are Makkī. Imām Nasā’ī transmits a narrative from Sayyidnā Ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه that when the Holy Prophet ﷺ arrived in Madīnah, the people of Madīnah whose most transactions were based on measurements used to cheat and short measure. For this reason, Allah revealed the Sūrah. It is reported from Sayyidnā Ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه that this is the first Sūrah that was revealed as soon as the Holy Prophet ﷺ arrived at Madīnah. The reason is that it was a common practice in Madinah that the people used to be very strict in measuring when they had to receive something from others, but when they sold something, they used to cheat the buyers. After the revelation of this Sūrah, all of them abandoned this bad custom totally, and mended themselves in a way that they are now well-known in their honesty in weighing and measuring. (Reported by Ḥakīm, Nasā’ī, and Ibn Mājah, with sound chain of narrators)

وَيْلٌ لِّلْمُطَفِّفِينَ (Woe to the curtailers...83:1) The word *muṭaffifīn* 'those who give short measure or weight' is derived from *Tatfīf* 'to give short measure or short weight'. The Qur’ānic expression 'Woe to the curtailers' is indicative of the injunction that this practice is prohibited.

Tatfīf has a Wider Scope

The Qur’ān and Sunnah have prohibited *Tatfīf* which primarily

signifies 'giving short measure and weight', because generally all transactions are carried out by things that can be measured or weighed. But the basic purpose of weighing or measuring is none else but to give a person what he deserves. It, therefore, indicates that the rule is not restricted to weights and measures only, but it includes all other means through which the rights of someone are evaluated, assessed or appraised. It is obligatory that all rights are given to the deserving persons in full, whether they are assessed by weight, measure, number or any other means. In terms of this concept of *Tatfīf*, it is prohibited to give to any person less than his due.

It is recorded in Muwāṭṭā' of Imām Mālik that Sayyidnā 'Umar Ibn-ul-Khaṭṭāb ؓ saw a person curtailing [cutting short] his bowing and prostration postures in prayers, he said to him:

لَقَدْ طَفَّفْتَ

'You have committed *Tatfīf* (curtailed the right) of Allah.'

Having cited this statement of Sayyidnā 'Umar Ibn-ul-Khaṭṭāb ؓ, Imām Mālik formulates the following postulate:

لكل شيءٍ وفاءٌ وتطفيفٌ

'Everything has a full due and a short measure.'

This postulate can apply even to prayers, ablution, cleanliness and all the rights of Allah and the ways of worship. If someone is deficient in fulfilling these rights of Allah, he is guilty of *Tatfīf*. Similarly if one cuts short human rights [by failing to perform duties imposed upon him or keeping to the terms of agreement duly], he is covered by the rule laid down by the verse regarding *Tatfīf*. For example, if an employee has entered into a contract with the employer that he shall work for specified time, it is imperative for him to work for the stipulated hours. If he curtails the hours, he is guilty of *Tatfīf*. Generally, people - even scholars - are lax in this matter. They do not regard curtailment of their obligations relating to service or labour as sin. May Allah protect us from it!

HADĪTH: Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Abbās ؓ has narrated that the Holy Prophet ﷺ has said:

خمس بـخمس

'There are five sins, for which there are five punishments.'

[1] He who breaks his covenant, Allah will cause his enemy to subdue him.

[2] The nation that abandons the sacred laws of Allah, and decides cases according to other laws, poverty will prevail commonly among them.

[3] The nation among whom promiscuity and *zinā* (fornication or adultery) becomes rampant, Allah will punish them with epidemics and endemic diseases.

[4] Those who curtail measures and weights, Allah will cause famine to break out amongst them. and

[5] Those who fail to pay their *Zakāh*, Allah will withhold rain from them.

[Cited by Qurṭubī who said that Al-Bazzār has narrated the over-all sense of this *ḥadīth*, though with different words; and Mālik Ibn Anas has also narrated it from Ibn 'Umar].

Ṭabarānī narrates from Ibn 'Abbās ؓ that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said: "When it becomes rampant in a community to steal from the spoils of war, Allah will cast terror of enemies into their hearts; when usury becomes a common practice in a community, death becomes a frequent occurrence in that society; a community that gives short measure and weight, Allah cuts off their sustenance; those who decide against the truth, murder becomes common among them; and those who betray their agreement, Allah causes their enemies to prevail upon them." [Mālik has also transmitted it, but as a saying of Ibn 'Abbās. See Mazḥarī].

Various Forms of Poverty, Famine and Curtailment of Sustenance

The Ḥadīth (cited above) states that people's 'sustenance' may be Cut Off as a punishment to short measuring: This can take different forms. They may be completely deprived of their sustenance; or sustenance may be available, but they may not be able to eat or use it, as it commonly happens nowadays in the case of many diseases. Likewise, 'famine' might take different forms: Items of necessity might be lacking; or they might be

available abundantly, but it might be difficult to purchase them, because the prices are unbearably exorbitant, as is experienced nowadays. The Ḥadīth says that in certain situations *faqr* will prevail in the society. *Faqr* is generally translated as 'poverty', but its real meaning in Arabic is 'being in need' or 'being dependent on someone'. Keeping this meaning in view, the situation of *faqr* pointed out in the Ḥadīth is not confined to lack of money and other necessary things, but it also includes a situation where people depend on others in their business and other necessities of life. The more a person is in need of others, the greater is his degree of *faqr*. Let us consider the conditions of the present age. Man is bound by the most complicated laws that restrict his living, his movement and his intentions, so that he is unable to eat what he wants to eat, or utter what he wants to utter. He possesses money, but he is not free to buy of his choice from where he wants to. He is not free to undertake a journey [or to travel] as and when he wants to. He is bound so much by these restrictive laws that he has no choice but to follow the official procedure for which he has to flatter the officials [at every level] including the peons. Without this, life is difficult. This entire system of dependence on others is a part of *faqr*. This elaborate explanation should dispel the doubts that might apparently arise regarding the statement of the Ḥadīth.

***Sijjīn* and 'illiyīn**

كَلَّا إِنَّ كِتَابَ الْفُجَّارِ لَفِي سِجِّينٍ (Never! [i.e. they should never forget that Day.] Indeed the Record of Deeds of the sinners is in *sijjīn*. [83:7]) The word *sijjīn* is derived from *sajana* which means 'imprison in a narrow place'. According to Qāmūs, the word *sijjīn* means 'eternal imprisonment'. Traditions indicate that *sijjīn* is a special place where the souls of the non-believers are kept, and in the same place, the Record of the evil deeds of every wicked person is kept separately. It is also possible that in this there is a consolidated book in which the deeds of all the non-believers of the world are recorded.

Where is this place? According to a lengthy *ḥadīth* reported by Sayyidnā Bara' Ibn 'Azib رضي الله عنه, the Holy Prophet ﷺ has said that *sijjīn* is beneath the seventh level of the earth, and 'illiyīn is in the seventh heaven beneath the Divine Throne. [Baghawī, and Aḥmad etc., as quoted by Maḥzarī]. According to certain Traditions, *sijjīn* is the seventh earth which

contains the souls of the disbelievers, and 'illiyīn is the seventh heaven which contains the souls of the believers.

The Locale of Paradise and Hell

Baihaqī has recorded a narration from Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Salām ؓ that Paradise is in the heaven, and Hell is in the earth. Ibn Jarīr cites in his commentary on the authority of Sayyidnā Mu'adh Ibn Jabal ؓ a narrative of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, according to which he was asked about the meaning of the following verse:

وَجَايَءُ يَوْمَئِذٍ بِجَهَنَّمَ

'and Jahannam (Hell), on that day, will be brought forward,
[89:23]

The Holy Prophet ﷺ was asked from where the Hell be brought forward? He replied: "From the seventh earth." These narratives indicate that Hell will be brought forward from the seventh earth. It will suddenly flare up there, and all the oceans will join its blazing fire, and come forward in full view of all. This interpretation is reconcilable with narratives that define *sijjīn* as the name of a place in Hell. [Maḏharī]. And Allah knows best!

كُتِبَ مَرْقُومٌ (A register inscribed!...83:9) The word *marqūm* (translated above as 'inscribed') signifies here *makhtūm* meaning 'sealed'. Imām Baghawī and Ibn Kathīr say that this statement is not the interpretation of *sijjīn*, but rather the explication of a phrase before that, namely:

كُتِبَ الْفُجَّارِ

'Indeed the record of deeds of the sinners is in *sijjīn*. [83:7]

It is a book inscribed and sealed. No one can add anything to it, nor can anyone remove anything from it, nor is any alteration possible in it. The place where it will be kept for safe-custody is called *sijjīn*, and it is the place where the souls of the wicked unbelievers are gathered.

كَأَلَّا بَلَ سَكَ رَانَ عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ مَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ (No! But that which they used to commit has covered their hearts with rust...83:14). The word *rāna* is derived from *rain* and it means 'rust' or 'dust' or 'filth'. In other words, the rust of committing many sins has covered up their hearts. Just as rust consumes the iron, and turns it into dust, in the same way, the rust of

sins has destroyed their innate capacity to distinguish right from wrong. Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah رضي الله عنه narrates that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said: "Surely, when the servant commits a sin, a black dot appears on his heart. If he repents from it, his heart is polished clean. However, if he increases in the sin, the blackness continues to increase. That is the statement of Allah: *كَأَنَّهُمْ كَلَّأَ بِلُحُوبِهِمْ رَانًا عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ* 'No! But that which they used to commit has covered their hearts with rust. [83:14]'." [Baghawī, Aḥmad, Tirmidhī, Nasā'ī, Ibn Mājah, Ibn Ḥibbān and al-Ḥākim have recorded it, and Tirmidhī has rated it as saḥih, asquoted by Maḥzarī]. The particle *kallā*, in Arabic grammar, is called *ḥarf-ur-rad'* 'particle of disapproval, particle of repelling or averting'. In the preceding verses, mention was made of the attitude of the unbelievers towards the Qur'ānic verses, in that when they are recited to them, they say, "(These are) tales of the ancients." [13]. The present verse uses *kallā* to repel the false idea of the ignoramus [that Qur'ān is the tale of the ancients]. In fact, [the heavy] load of their sins have eclipsed the light and innate capacity to separate the right and the wrong. This capacity is innate and inborn in man. The verse purports to say that their rejection is not based on any logical or intellectual evidence, but their hearts have become blind, as a result they are unable to see the good and the bad.

إِنَّهُمْ عَنْ رَبِّهِمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ لَمَّحْجُوبُونَ (No! Indeed they will be screened off from their Lord on that Day...83:15). This will be their punishment for their failure to recognise Allah in the world. The unbelievers will remain deprived of seeing their Lord on the Day of Judgement, and a screen will fall between them and their Lord. Imāms Shāfi'ī and Mālik said that in this verse is a proof that the believers and friends of Allah will be able to see Him. Otherwise, the wording that the unbelievers will be screened off from their Lord on that Day will have no real sense.

Special Note

According to some of the learned predecessors, this verse is a proof that man, by virtue of his innate nature, is forced to love Allah. Therefore, all unbelievers in the world, no matter how deeply they are steeped in their form of disbelief or hold false beliefs regarding the [Supreme] Being and attributes of Allah, there is a common denominator in their hearts. They love, respect and honour Allah. They worship Him according to their belief system in quest of Him and His pleasure. Because they have taken the wrong road, they are unable to reach their

destination, but they are, nonetheless, in search of the same destination of truth. If they did not have the desire to see their Lord, it would not have been said, in their punishment, that they will remain deprived of seeing Allah, because if a person is not desirous [rather he is hateful] of seeing Him, it would be no punishment for him.

كَلَّا إِنَّ كِتَابَ الْأَبْرَارِ لَفِي عِلِّيَّيْنَ (No! The record of deeds of the righteous is in 'illiyyūn....83:18). According to some authorities, 'illiyyūn is the plural of 'uluww and it signifies the 'highest point'. According to Farrā', this is the name of a place. It is not a plural, but on the measure of plural. When analysing the word *sijjīn* in the foregoing paragraphs, the traceable Tradition of Sayyidnā Barā' Ibn 'Āzib ؓ was cited to prove that 'illiyyīn is a place on the seventh heaven beneath the Divine Throne where the souls of the believers and their registers of deeds are kept. The phrase: كِتَابٌ مَّرْقُومٌ (A register inscribed...83:20) is not the interpretation of 'illiyyīn, but rather an explication their records of deeds, as in the verse that precedes it:

يُسْهَدُهُ الْمُرَقَّبُونَ (...attended by those [angels] who are blessed with nearness to Allah!...83:21) The verb *yash-hadu* is derived from *shuhūd* which means 'to attend, to witness, to be present, to observe'. The verse purports to say that the record of deeds of the righteous will be in the custody of angels who are blessed with nearness to Allah. [Qurtubī]. If *shuhūd* is taken in the sense of 'being present', then the attached pronoun will refer to 'illiyyīn instead of *kitāb* or 'register' (and 'those who are blessed with nearness to Allah' will refer to the righteous people, and not to the angels), and the verse in that case will mean: 'The souls of those blessed with nearness to Allah will be in the place called 'illiyyīn' because that is the abode of their souls, as *sijjīn* is the abode of the unbelievers. The proof of this is the narrative of 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd ؓ recorded in Muslim in which the Holy Prophet ﷺ said that the souls of the martyrs are in the crops of green birds, enjoying the rivers and gardens of Paradise, and their abode will be the lamps suspended from [the Divine] Throne. This indicates that the souls of the martyrs will be under the Divine Throne, and will be able to stroll in Paradise. In Sūrah Yāsīn, we came across the incident of Ḥabīb Najjār, where it is stated that:

قِيلَ ادْخُلِ الْجَنَّةَ قَالَ يَا لَيْتَ قَوْمِي يَعْلَمُونَ بِمَا غَفَرَ لِي رَبِّي

'He was told, "Enter the Garden!" He said, "If my people only knew how my Lord has forgiven me [36:26]"

This indicates that no sooner he passed away than he entered Paradise. Similarly, some Prophetic narratives also show that the souls of the believers are in Paradise. The sum total of these verses and narratives is that the abode of all the souls is in the seventh heaven beneath the Divine Throne. This is the locale of Paradise, and the souls have been given freedom of movement within the Paradise. Here reference has been made particularly to 'those souls who are blessed with nearness to Allah' because of the most exalted ranks they will enjoy. [This does not, however, mean that souls at the lower ranks will not be in this abode.] In fact, this will be the abode of the souls of all the believers as is narrated by Sayyidnā Ka'b Ibn Mālīk رضي الله عنه that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said:

انما نسمة المؤمن طائر يعلق في شجر الجنة حتى ترجع الى جسده يوم القيامة.
(رواه مالك والنسائي بسند صحيح)

'The soul of a believer is a bird that will be hanging in the tree of Paradise, until it returns to its body on the Day of Judgement.' [Mālīk and Nasā'ī through an authentic chain of narrators. A Tradition of Umm Hānī' to the same effect is recorded in Musnad of Aḥmad and in Ṭabarānī. See Maẓharī].

The Abode of Human Souls After Death

What is the abode of human souls after death? In answer to this question, reports seem apparently different. Narratives were cited in explanation of *sijjīn* and *'illiyyūn* above which showed that the souls of the unbelievers are in *sijjīn* which is beneath the seventh earth, and the souls of the believers are in *'illiyyūn* which is in the seventh heaven beneath the Divine Throne. Some traditions indicate that the souls of the unbelievers will be in Hell, and the souls of the believers will be in Paradise. Some narratives, like the lengthy narrative of Barā' Ibn 'Āzib, suggest that the souls of all the deceased, believers and non-believers, will be in the graves. When the angels carry the soul of a believer to the sky, Allah says: 'Keep the record of deeds of this servant of mine in *'illiyyūn* and return him to the earth, because I have created him from earth, and to it I shall return him, and from it I shall resurrect him.' Complying with this command, the angels return his soul to the grave. Likewise, the soul

of the non-believer is carried to the sky, but the doors are not opened for him. The angels will be commanded to return the soul to its grave. Imām ‘Abdul Barr prefers this narrative and believes that the souls of all [believers and non-believers] remain in their graves. As for the first two sets of traditions, there is no contradiction because, carefully considered, ‘*illīyyūn* is in the seventh heaven beneath the Divine Throne, and this is exactly the locale of Paradise, as is clear from the Qur’ānic text:

عِنْدَ سِدْرَةِ الْمُنتَهَى عِنْدَهَا جَنَّةُ الْمَأْوَى

'by sidrat-ul-muntaha (the lot-tree in the upper realm), near which there is Jannat-ul-ma'wa (the Paradise of Abode), [53:14-15]

This clearly states that Paradise is near the lot-tree in the upper realm, and *aḥādīth* confirm that the lot-tree is in the seventh heaven. Thus it may be argued that since the abode of the souls is ‘*illīyyūn*, Paradise must be near it. These souls will stroll in and along the Gardens of Paradise. Therefore, their abode may be said to be Paradise.

Similarly, the souls of the unbelievers remain in *sijjīn* which is situated beneath the seventh earth. It is also proved by *ahādīth* that Hell is beneath the seventh earth, and the dwellers of *sijjīn* will receive the heat and torture of the Hell. Therefore, it would be correct to say that their abode is in Hell.

However, the *hadith* that informs us that the souls of the unbelievers will remain in the graves, is apparently contradictory to the preceding two narratives. The Baihaqī of his time, Qāḍī Thanā’ullah Pānī Patī, in his *Tafsīr Maḥzarī*, has reconciled them thus: It is not far-fetched to assume that ‘*illīyyūn* and *sijjīn* are the real abodes of the souls, but they have a special connection with their graves. None, besides Allah, knows the actual nature of the connection. However, there is the sun and the moon in the sky, but their rays fall on the earth and provide to it light and heat. Similarly, the souls of ‘*illīyyūn* and *sijjīn* may have some spiritual connection with the graves. The scholarly view of Qāḍī Thanā’ullah Pānī Patī has just been discussed in Sūrah Nāzi‘āt, the sum total of which is as follows: There are two types of soul: The one is a subtle substance that permeates the human body. Despite being a material substance, it is too subtle to be visible, and its other name is *nafs*. The other soul is abstract and non-material, pure essence. The pure, abstract and non-material soul

is the life of the first soul, and therefore it is called the 'soul of soul'. Both the categories of souls are connected to human body, but the first type of soul resides in the human body. When the soul leaves the body, death occurs. The second type of soul is connected with the body more closely than the first type, but Allah alone knows the nature of the connection. The first soul, after death, is taken to the heaven, and then returned to the grave. Grave is its abode where it is rewarded and punished. The abstract soul remains in *'illiyyūn* or *sijjīn* [as the case might be]. Thus we have several views on the issue. The final destination of souls is Paradise or *'illiyyūn*, or its opposite Hell or *sijjīn*. The abode of the abstract souls is *'illiyyūn* or *sijjīn*. The souls of the first type, the *nafs*, or the body, remains in the grave after death. And Allah knows best!

وَفِي ذَلِكَ فَلْيَتَنَافَسِ الْمُتَنَافِسُونَ (and in aspiring for this, the competitors should compete....83:26) The word *tanāfus* means for a few people 'to try or strive to gain some desirable things before others can get them.' Having mentioned the bounties of Paradise, the attention of heedless people are drawn to the fact that they are thinking that certain material things are desirable, and therefore they are competing one another to obtain them before others. They are told that the material blessings [after which they are running] are perishable. They should not be made the ultimate goal of life, nor the object of racing. Man should be content with what he has for the comfort of the fleeting period of this life. If he loses the means, it should not hurt him much, because it is not a loss that cannot be recovered. However, people with aspiration should aspire, race and compete for the blessings of Paradise that are perfect and eternal in every possible dimension. How aptly the late poet Akbar has put it:

یہ کہاں کا فسانہ ہے سود و زیاں، جو گیا سو گیا جو ملا سو ملا
کہو دل سے فرصت عمر ہے کم، جو دلا تو خدا ہی کی یاد دلا

'Gain and loss - what fiction is this?

What is lost is lost, what is gained is gained

Say to the mind, the life is little.

If you wish to remind me, remind me of God.'

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ أَجْرَمُوا كَانُوا مِنَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا يَضْحَكُونَ (Indeed those who were guilty used to laugh at those who believed, 83:29). In these verses, Allah depicts fully the attitudes of the followers of falsehood [non-believers] towards the

upholders of truth [the believers]. The non-believers used to laugh at the believers in the worldly life. In other words, they would mock at them and despise them. Whenever they would pass by the believers, they would wink at each other in contempt of them. When the non-believers returned home, they would take great pleasure in describing the mocking manner in which they treated the poor believers, saying that Muḥammad has misled the simpletons.

If we review the situation today, [it is no better.] People whose minds are contaminated with contemporary secular education, are careless about the religion and the Hereafter. Belief in Allah and the Holy Prophet ﷺ is nominal. They treat the [religious] scholars and righteous people exactly in the same manner as the non-believers used to treat the Companions in the days of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. May Allah salvage the Muslims from this painful scourge. There is much solace in this verse for the righteous believers. Never bother about their laughter and mockery. How well a poet puts it:

ہم نے جانے سے جب تک ہم ڈریں گے
زمانہ ہم پہ ہنستا ہی رہے گا

'So long as we fear people's laughter [at us],
the people will continue laughing at us'

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah At-Taṭfīf
Ends here